

HOTWASH

Morongo Band of Mission Indians

Full Scale Exercise (FSE) and School Evacuation and Reunification and Full Activation of the EOC 2022

Date: October 21, 2022

This exercise is a Full-Scale Functional Exercise for the Morongo School to be evacuated by Riverside Sheriff Office (RSO), California Highway Patrol (CHP) and Morongo Tribal PD and evacuate all Morongo School students by Morongo's Transportation Department to an undetermined reunification point and reunify all students with their parent/guardian and full activation of the EOC.

Participants:

Morongo Emergency Management Department

Morongo EOC Staff

Morongo School

Morongo Transportation Department

Morongo Tribal PD

MCRS Public Safety

Morongo Fire Department

Riverside County Sheriff's Department

California Highway Patrol

Narrative:

Upon conclusion of the FSE a hotwash was conducted with all participants at the Morongo Tribal Hall. The overall response was positive however some areas of improvement were identified:

Areas of Improvement:

Finance Section:

- The Finance Section Chiefs need to know the combination to their safe at the EOC.
- Looking into the possibility of petty cash for their safe and the process of using it.
- Paperwork flow at the EOC can be confusing.
- Need to request office supplies from Logistics in the future.
- Everyone should sign and fully complete all documents.
- Request portable power supply in the future.

Planning:

- Lots of paperwork to keep up with.
- Field communications regarding road closures and who is responsible.
- Reporting of students and staff counts were coming in from several sources and they were all conflicting.
- Communications need to be clear and concise.
- Abbreviations and acronyms were used in the documents, and they should not be.
- Radio communications can be difficult to hear in the room of people talking.

Logistics:

- Radio, website, and communications were worked out in the first 20 minutes.
- Documents need to be clearer to indicate if a request needs to be fulfilled or if there is just information being distributed.
- Radios should come through disposable earpieces or somehow isolate communications in another area to get better clarity when transmitting.
- Food Unit
 - Plan for additional food next exercise.
 - Prep serving sizes in advance.
 - Include fruit options.

Operations:

- Radio use in a noisy environment and having to ask for repeats.
- Planned transportation routes need a little more work.
- Law Branch
 - Assume road closures and put them, in the plan including where the kids will be going (options).
- Fire Branch
 - Planned for the typical response for this type of incident.
 - Same issues hearing the radio transmissions in a noisy room.

Management:

- On the radios, everyone should use normal speak/language, and everyone should repeat back the transmission they received for confirmation.
- Maps needed for the tables and vehicles.
- Public Information Officer (PIO)
 - Information should be coming to them, and they shouldn't need to chase it down; sections should provide as much information as possible.
 - PIO team would like to sit next to the Communications Unit.
 - Clearer directions to start the event. A message when to the school to start, but the rest of the group didn't know it started. There need to be clearer steps to start the event/exercise.
 - The student count must be accurately reported so it can be released accurately.

- o If we could have parents stay in their cars and do a drive through pick up, it would be helpful. (Vice Principal requested)
- School Principal
 - o Wait time in lockdown can't be predicted, but it is for safety.
 - o Blue lights in classrooms did not come on. They need to be checked.
 - o Clear radio communications are so important when moving the students.
 - o The school would like someone from the EOC at the reunification site to be the one and only source of reporting to the EOC instead of one or more of the teachers doing the reporting in.
- Social Services
 - o Operations ordered Social Services to the reunification site and they went, but the EOC Director didn't see the request.
- When a request is delivered the 413 should be updated as fulfilled or complete and the action that was taken should be noted to close the loops properly and effectively on the paperwork.

Morongo Fire Deputy Fire Chief (Provided Comments via Email on November 4, 2022):

- The participants functioned as a team to support each other and meet the needs of Incident Commander to safely evacuate the children.
- Exercise objectives should be developed, provided to exercise participants, and briefed upon. This will allow for the responders to clearly understand the strategy and tactics needed to meet all objectives. Following the exercise, a final review needs to be conducted and validate whether the objectives have been met.
- Section training was conducted prior to the exercise. Yet, listening to some of the comments during the hot wash, some either didn't grasp the intent of this specific training or failed to participate. This typically will lead to EOC responders trying to understand their roles during an exercise or actual event when we expect for them to be capable of fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Would recommend that Section specific exercise scenarios be included in the trainings and that it is mandated attendance. Also, the OPS section never met internally during the exercise. There may have been others who did not receive expectations from their section leaders
- At the start of the exercise, a EOC briefing should be considered. This allows an opportunity to brief EOC responders on the current situation, "where it's been, where it is at, and where is it going." Key positions will provide the update for the initial briefing. The information has been validated and provides for a unified message to the responders. It also provides direction for product delivery and meeting schedules.
- While observing the participants during the exercise, there was some confusion on the number of children being evacuated. Multiple people were reporting numbers which the totals were not in alignment. This led to some frustrations and questions regarding accountability of the children being evacuated. The role of the EOC is to assist with the resource requests from the field. Simply stated, provide a vehicle, driver, destination and the IC or his designee provides the number being evacuated. Accountability for the evacuated lies with the IC and School district.

- Would recommend that you re-consider deploying a EOC responder to the ICP. This position will serve to be valuable for intelligence and providing a means of communication from the field to the EOC.
- Break-down in communication for the commencement of the drill with the cooperating agencies. The IC was not aware the exercise had started until the buses drove by.